DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 196 336 HE 013 325

AUTHOR Fisher-Thompson, Jeanne
TITLE Re-entry Women and Graduate School. Field Evaluation Draft.
INSTITUTION Association of American Colleges, Washington, D.C. Project on the Status and Education of Women.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Oct 80
GRANT G0079-01070
NOTE 12p.: For related documents, see HE 013 324-327.
AVAILABLE FROM Women's Re-entry Project, Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1818 R Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Access to Education: Adult Students: Career Planning: College Admission: Employment Potential: Equal Education: Federal Legislation: *Females: *Graduate Students: Higher Education: Nontraditional Students: Part Time Students: *Reentry Students: Sex Discrimination: Student College Relationship: Student Financial Aid: *Student Needs: *Womens Education

ABSTRACT

Problems and barriers women often face when re-entering the educational system at the graduate level are identified, and ways in which institutions can be more responsive to the needs of re-entry students are suggested. A wide range of possible actions is included so that institutions can pursue those most appropriate to their individual circumstances. The following areas are covered: admissions, part-time study, financial aid, support systems, career planning, and improving the employment prospects of women with graduate degrees. Among the admission barriers are little effort to recruit women candidates, requiring courses as prerequisites that have only been offered in the last few years, placing limits on the age of credits accepted, changing graduation requirements, requiring letters of recommendation, the current grade inflation trend, and attitudes of interviewers. Other barriers are that most financial aid is directed to full-time students, and these students face difficulties because of residency requirements (number of courses taken), class scheduling, and lack of access to school services. Once the re-entry student has gained admission, there is a need for encouragement throughout graduate study and an appropriate entry-level position upon graduation. An annotated bibliography and information on Title IX of the Education Amendments, the Public Health Service Act, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 are included. A field evaluation questionnaire for the assessment of this paper is attached. (SW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED196336

Field Evaluation Draft

project on the status and education of women

Re-entry Women and Graduate School*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
WHAT IS A "RE-ENTRY WOMAN"?	1
LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS	2
Title IX of the Education Amendments	2
The Public Health Service Act	2
The Age Discrimination Act of 1975	2
ADMISSIONS	3
PART-TIME STUDENT—FULL FLEDGED COMMITMENT	4
FINANCIAL AID	5
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	6
Support Systems	6
Career Planning	7
The Present Employment Picture	8
CONCLUSION	8
SELECTED LIST OF RESOURCES	10

WANTED: Your Opinion

As part of its WEEA project on the educational needs of re-entry women and other nontraditional postsecondary students, the Project on the Status and Education of Women seeks your reactions and comments on each one of the papers developed. Please help us by filling out the brief questionnaire at the back of this paper and return it by December 15, 1980 in the pre-paid envelope we have provided. We look forward to receiving your suggestions.

INTRODUCTION

When asked to describe a "typical" returning female student, most people mention a woman going back to college for her undergraduate degree. Not surprisingly, most re-entry programs across the country reflect this assumption and are generally designed for undergraduates. However, along with the increase of undergraduates returning to campus, there has also been a significant upswing in the number of women students returning to attend graduate school.[1]

Although many institutions have not yet recognized this trend, all indications are that it will continue to grow in years to come, especially with the graduation of returning women who are now undergraduates. Yet these actual and projected enrollment increases have been and will continue to be limited by the many obstacles that re-entry graduate women have to overcome. Whether they stay at a particular school and whether other re-entry women follow them will depend largely on that institution's understanding of their concerns as graduate students and as adults.

WHAT IS A "RE-ENTRY WOMAN"?

For the purposes of this paper, a re-entry woman is defined as any woman who has interrupted her education after college and is seeking to enter or re-enter a university for the purpose of earning a graduate degree.[2] She may never have attended graduate school before; she may have left before completing a degree; or she may be starting an additional graduate degree. She may have interrupted her study for several reasons, such as:

- marriage;
- child rearing;
- starting work;
- moving to a different location, perhaps because of her husband's job; and/or
- economic reasons.

Some of the reasons that the re-entry woman did not continue her education initially may still be operating when she does return to school. For example, she may have difficulty in getting child care, in financing her degree, and/or combining school with work.

However, it should be stressed that the re-entry woman in graduate school is academically on a par with "traditional" students. Institutions which do not encourage re-entry women to apply may miss out on an excellent source of good graduate students.[3] A recent article published by the Council of Graduate Schools concurs with this view:

> "Graduate education should become progressively more plural by seeking those groups which have lacked equal access historically to post-graduate education in this country. Recruitment of these groups will require expanded information and financial assistance; it will also require program development that meets alternative career demands along with appropriate counseling."[4]

Recognizing that re-entry women *do* comprise one of these groups, institutions can then go on to prepare for

*This paper was written by Jeanne Fisher-Thompson. Staff from the Women's Re-entry Project and the Project on the Status and Education of Women also contributed to the research and development of this paper.

FIELD EVALUATION DRAFT: This paper was developed under Grant #G0079-01070 from the Women's Educational Equity Act Program of the Department of Education. Opinions expressed here do not necessarily reflect the position or the policy of the Department of Education, or the Association of American Colleges, and no official endorsement should be inferred. For further information, contact the Women's Re-entry Project, Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1818 R St., NW, Washington, DC 20009 (202) 387-1300.

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

HE013 325

their arrival.

The first step toward helping re-entry women gain access to the benefits of graduate education is to recognize that the obstacles that many face have largely been erected by "tradition." Most graduate schools were set up for younger students, whose undergraduate experience was not far behind them. In order to accommodate older students who have a wider range of experiences and responsibilities, some changes may need to be made.

This paper identifies some of the problems and barriers women often face when re-entering the educational system at the graduate level. Additionally, ways in which institutions can be more responsive to the needs of re-entry students are suggested. Since the appropriateness of a particular suggestion will depend on the characteristics of the institution and those of its re-entry students, a wide range of possible actions is included.

Because many of the barriers which limit the access of re-entry women also limit the access of other nontraditional students, institutions are likely to find that many of the issues and recommendations in this paper are helpful in increasing educational opportunities and participation for other nontraditional students as well.

LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS[5]

Title IX of the Education Amendments[6]

In general, Title IX prohibits sex discrimination in all federally assisted education programs. Discrimination in admissions and recruiting is prohibited in all graduate schools.[7] Sections 86.21-86.23 of the Title IX regulation detail the recruiting and the admissions provisions of Title IX.[8]

- **The regulation bars quotas** based on the number or proportion of persons of either sex who may be admitted to institutions covered by Title IX.
- **Preference may not be given to one sex[9] nor may applicants be ranked separately by sex.**
- **Institutions may not use tests or other criteria for admission which have a disproportionate adverse effect on members of one sex** unless the test or criteria can be shown to validly predict success in the education program or activity in question, *and* alternative tests or criteria are not available.
- **Asking a student's marital status prior to admission is also prohibited.**
- **Institutions may not have rules or policies concerning parental, family, or marital status of students which make distinctions on the basis of sex, nor may they discriminate because of pregnancy or related conditions.**
- **Institutions must make comparable efforts to recruit members of each sex, except when special efforts to recruit members of one sex are needed to remedy the effects of past discrimination.[10]** Thus, special attempts to recruit re-entry women may be viewed as an attempt to remedy past discrimination. However, services and programs for re-entry women cannot exclude re-entry men. Materials describing these services and programs might read, "This program was designed for women who have been out of the work force and out of school for a period of years. Men who believe they would benefit from this program and would like to participate may do so."

In addition to the provisions concerning admissions, Title IX also prohibits institutions from treating men and women students differently.

Thus, policies must be the same for both sexes. For example, an institution could not have different graduation requirements for men and women. Additionally, in some instances, policies and practices which are ostensibly fair on their face but which disproportionately affect one sex more than the other may in some instances be considered discriminatory. For example, women's groups claim that restrictive policies which do not allow part-time study are discriminatory against women. Because women are more likely to attend part-time due to family responsibilities, the policy affects them in far greater numbers, even though the policy applies to both men and women alike.

The Public Health Service Act[11]

Titles VII and VIII of this Act were amended in 1971 to prohibit sex discrimination in admissions to federally funded programs for training health professionals such as doctors, nurses, and X-ray technicians. There are no exemptions from coverage. Thus, graduate programs receiving aid under this Act cannot discriminate in admissions. The provisions of this Act are generally consistent with those of Title IX.

The Age Discrimination Act of 1975[12]

This Act, effective January 1, 1979, prohibits discrimination on the basis of age in federally assisted programs and activities. Age is not defined; the Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of age *at any age*. Although there are some exemptions, most age discrimination in higher education is prohibited. Thus, policies and practices which restrict admissions on the basis of age are illegal. Additionally, policies which seem "reasonable" for younger students may deliberately or inadvertently discriminate against older women (and men), and thereby violate the Act.

Women, even as young as 25 or 30, are sometimes considered "too old" to enroll in certain postsecondary programs, particularly at the graduate level. While this attitude is changing, women who are older than traditional students are still sometimes seen as "deviants."

There seems to be no consistent rationale in the way different institutions (or different departments within the same institution) determine which age is "too old" for admittance. In one school it may be 30, in another 40, in another 45.[13] Others have no set age cut-off but take age into account, nevertheless. This is an area in which sex discrimination is often compounded by age discrimination.

ADMISSIONS

Re-entry women often find more difficulty in being admitted to graduate than undergraduate programs. The reasons for this may vary from school to school, but the obstacles generally fall into these categories:

- re-entry women are not specifically viewed as serious potential candidates for graduate school; therefore little effort is made to recruit them;
- graduate departments are often more selective than undergraduate departments, and the criteria for selection may inadvertently discriminate against students who have interrupted their education (such as requiring pre-requisite courses that have only been offered in the last few years);
- graduate programs usually accept fewer credits in transfer and may place limits on the "age" of the credits accepted;
- requirements for graduation from graduate school may have changed over the years, making it difficult for re-entry students to "pick up where they left off."

Underlying these obstacles and others is the tendency of many institutions to leave policies concerning these decisions *unwritten*. In most schools, individual graduate departments are responsible for determining where the recruiting effort should be concentrated and which students shall be admitted. However, the lack of written policy guidelines can lead to confusion, misunderstanding, arbitrary rules and wide disparities among departmental programs within the same institution. For example, in the past some graduate departments barred students over a certain age, but the age varied from department to department. Age restrictions in admission has become illegal with the passage of the 1975 Age Discrimination Act[14] but some traditions die hard. Without a directive from the school administration noting that age cannot be used as criteria for admission some departments might still follow "tradition" and, inadvertently, violate the law.

This same tendency to follow the "traditional" policy of recruiting primarily males for certain graduate and professional programs has made it difficult for many qualified women to be accepted. There is evidence, for example, that in some departments women students have been required to have higher grades than men, in order to be admitted to the same academic program.[15]

Aside from these barriers, potential re-entry graduate women face a host of other admissions problems related to the length of time they have been out of school. One is in the "letter of recommendation." Many departments rely heavily on recommendations, but older students who have lost contact with their former professors (or whose professors have died) may find it impossible to obtain such letters.

"Grade inflation" may also affect graduate admission for re-entry students. Grading patterns have changed over the years so that a student who did outstanding work twenty years ago might have only earned a "B". By today's standards, the grade might have been higher, yet the returning adult student's grades are often compared at face value with those of younger, recent graduates whose grades reflect different standards.

An additional consideration for re-entry women is that grades on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) — usually required for admission to graduate school —may be considered valid for only five years. The many re-entry women who have been out of school for longer than that time will have to take the examination again. For these students and others who have never taken the exam, the GREs may become a major source of anxiety. Adults who have not been using college-level mathematics in their everyday life are often most concerned with the math section of the exam. In addition, women who spend most of their time with small children may feel, perhaps unrealistically, that their vocabulary has suffered as a result.

Other barriers may surface during a required personal interview. The questions that are asked and the attitude of the interviewer toward older female applicants can not only result in a negative assessment of the applicant's ability, but may also be critical factors in the student's decision to pursue admission. Some faculty may feel uncomfortable relating to students their age or older. Additionally, some interviewers view negatively an irregular work and/or school history of a woman with childbearing and family responsibilities, as though it had the same connotation of instability which a similar history might imply for a male or someone without the demands of homemaking and family.

As a result, some potential students have been discouraged by an interviewer's intimation that they are "too old" or that their choice of field is "inappropriate." For example, female applicants to medical school have been told by interviewers to "forget a medical career and raise a family."[16] In a study of re-entry women applying to graduate school, 86 percent of the respondents said they had encountered "a negative reaction or some discouragement" either during the admissions process or upon first entering their department.[17] This type of reaction from faculty or administrators usually stems from the belief that women will "waste" their graduate training. However, innumerable studies have demonstrated that almost all women who complete graduate school go on to do productive work in their field whether or not they marry and have children.[18]

Even if an institution has recognized the barriers to re-entry students and has worked to remove them, many potential students may not be aware of the changes, particularly those who experienced sex discrimination in their early schooling. Some of the obstacles to graduate school are so taken for granted that many potential re-entry students may never even attempt to apply. To counteract this tendency, institutions which want to attract returning students need not only to remove barriers to graduate study, but also to mount a vigorous recruiting effort to demonstrate how things have changed.

What the Institution Can Do[19]

- **Re-examine departmental and institutional criteria for admissions to graduate school to in-**

sure that irrelevant characteristics (such as age) are not being used to determine eligibility.

- **Put all institutional and departmental policies in writing and make copies available to administrators, faculty, and potential students.**
- **Inform decision makers in the admissions process about the requirements of the Age Discrimination Act, Title IX, and the Public Health Service Act,** and any other laws that may bear directly on admissions practices.
- **Develop a process to inform new staff about anti-discrimination laws and institutional policies.**
- **Allow returning students to submit letters of recommendation from persons who have had recent contact with them, even if not in the academic sphere.**
- **Assess policies affecting the transfer of graduate credits.**[20]
- **Take "grade inflation" into account when assessing student records,** keeping in mind that it may obscure the academic ability of students who attended school years ago. In some instances, class rank may be a better indicator of relative ability than grade.
- **Allow students to be admitted on a provisional basis if they cannot provide recommendations, or if their GRE scores or previous grades are low.** Numerous institutions already do this, by basing their decision on an evaluation of the student's overall potential. Through the years, the practice of provisional admission has enabled many students, both women and men to demonstrate their ability for graduate school, and to successfully enter and complete graduate degree programs.
- **Offer refresher courses**[21] **for returning students to help them prepare for graduate work and/or the Graduate Record Examination.**
- **Provide workshops for faculty and administrators who deal with re-entry women graduate applicants to inform them about the re-entry population.**
- **Establish a task force composed of administrators, faculty, staff, and re-entry women to examine current recruiting practices in relation to older women.**
- **Determine whether special services are needed to retain these women as students.**
- **Lend full institutional support to both strategies and programs aimed at recruiting re-entry graduate women.**
- **Include re-entry graduate women among recruiters.**
- **Develop a specific plan to recruit re-entry graduate women.**[22] For example, the University of Michigan's Center for Continuing Education of Women recently offered a program called "Gearing Up for Graduate School: A University Welcome to Women." This program of lectures and workshops allowed potential students to explore graduate and professional opportunities and have their questions answered.
- **Have a "hot line" prospective re-entry graduate students can call.** Provide evening and weekend service, or alternatively, a recorded message containing information about the graduate school.
- **Offer a "workshop on applying to graduate school" for adults.** Potential students who are not already on campus have the most need of this kind of information. The University of California, Los Angeles developed a three-hour workshop with the help of faculty, admissions officers, and academic advisers to assist students in choosing a graduate school, and applying for admission.
- **Publish a separate brochure for potential re-entry graduate women students,** giving pertinent information on what to expect and how to apply. Michigan State University has a brochure called "Graduate Study for Women" listing admission requirements and deadlines, information on financial aid, and a self-mailer to request additional information.

PART-TIME STUDENT—FULL FLEDGED COMMITMENT

Probably the most difficult logistical adjustment that some re-entry graduate students are asked to make is to attend school full-time. For many a re-entry woman, full-time study is impossible for one or more of these reasons:

- she is employed;
- she is a parent and has to care for young children; or
- she cannot afford to pay full-time tuition.

At the present time many graduate programs are not open to part-time students, presumably because "if the students were really serious about graduate school, they would find a way to go full-time." Yet, re-entry students *are* serious about their education and as a group earn higher grade point averages than younger students.[23] The fact that a re-entry woman may only be able to attend part-time does not decrease her maturity or her high level of motivation. In fact, the part-time, re-entry graduate student may well be more committed to obtaining an education than her younger, full-time counterpart.

However, on many campuses it is difficult for re-entry students to pursue graduate study on a part-time basis because of the following:

- Financial aid is generally restricted to full-time students.
- Class schedules may require that students spend a great deal of time on campus between classes.
- Faculty advisers and administrative services may be unavailable during the hours when part-time students are on campus.
- Child care may be available only to full-time students.[24]
- Residency requirements may specify that a certain number of courses must be taken as a *full-time student* in order to complete a degree. This

requirement, especially in graduate programs, is a particular hardship for many women. Some women can *only* attend school part-time, particularly those with small children and/or those who must work to support their families. They *cannot* fulfill such a requirement — no matter how long they attend the institution or how many credits they earn. For some, this requirement has meant postponing their education for many years or giving up the goal of obtaining a degree.

- A time limit is placed on the completion of graduate study. At some institutions if a student does not complete her degree within three to seven years, she may not be allowed to continue.[25]

What the Institution Can Do

- **Allow graduate students to attend school part-time,**[26] whether during the day, in the evening, or on weekends.
- **Maintain records on part-time students and applicants to determine how they fare in relation to full-time students. Evaluate any differences to see if new policies or services are needed.**
- **Allow graduate students to fulfill residency requirements through part-time study.**
- **Re-evaluate policies regarding time limits on degree completion with returning part-time students in mind.**
- **Help change faculty attitudes about part-time students by providing them with information about the institution's policy.**
- **Determine when part-time students are most likely to be on campus and encourage faculty members and administrators to hold office hours during these times.**
- **Consider establishing "telephone office hours"** so that students who need to be off campus a great deal can still contact their advisors at specified times.
- **Allow part-time students to use child care services, and keep them open on weekends and in the evening.**
- **Make a lounge available to part-time students** so they may study or meet other part-time students between classes.
- **Develop special materials for part-time graduate students,** detailing policies, procedures, office hours of student services, and other programs and services in the community. For example, the Associate Alumnae of Douglass College (NJ) published an extensive listing of nearby institutions' policies called "Part-time Graduate and Professional Study in the Metropolitan Area."
- **Include materials on part-time graduate study in recruiting activities and information.**
- **Explore innovative options for scheduling part-time graduate study,** such as weekend college and short-term evening and morning classes.[27] At the C.W. Post Center of Long Island University (NY) a number of Master's degree programs are available through their Weekend College.
- **Encourage the development of part-time residencies for medical students.**[28] This would allow women with children to more readily combine career and family. Some hospitals have already instituted part-time residencies.

FINANCIAL AID

Finding money for graduate education is generally more difficult than for the baccalaureate degree. As outlined in "Financial Aid: Helping Re-entry Women Pay College Costs,"[29] there are three major student assistance programs administered by the Department of Education which apply to graduate students: The Guaranteed Student Loan Program, The National Direct Student Loan Program, and the College Work-Study Program. (Half-time students are eligible for all three.) Since none of these programs provide grants, however, students who take advantage of them must be prepared to pay back loans after graduation and/or work at school during the term. Re-entry women may also turn to other types of aid — namely, specialized federal programs, state scholarships, private scholarships, institutional fellowships or assistantships.[30] Although there is much competition for aid, it is not a lack of ability that keeps many re-entry graduate women from receiving it. More often, the factor which bars them from obtaining aid is the *requirement that they be full-time students*. Yet many re-entry women have additional responsibilities, whether in paid employment or at home, that may make it impossible to be full-time or even half-time students, depending on how half-time is defined at their school. Unfortunately, some faculty and administrators, particularly financial aid officers, mistakenly believe that less than full-time study is less than serious commitment. Thus, most of the aid money is given to full-time students. Until this is changed, finding financial aid for adult graduate students will continue to be a problem.[31]

What the Institution Can Do

- **Keep up-to-date records of financial aid awards to students. Periodically examine them to identify trends that might indicate a disproportionate preference being given to students on the basis of age or sex. Maintain data on applications from and assistance given to part-time and full-time students.**
- **Publicize the fact that age does not disqualify adult students from receiving financial assistance.** Many older students are not aware that they can be eligible for funds.
- **Simplify financial aid forms and make them more appropriate for adult students** (such as not requiring a parent's signature). For example, the University College of the University of Maryland at College Park has recently shortened its application forms for aid and has included child care in the list of student expenses.

- **Assign a particular person in the financial aid office to work with re-entry graduate students.** This person should be well-acquainted with any additional forms of aid open to adult graduate students, such as tuition reimbursement plans, special scholarships for re-entry students, and tuition waivers for retired persons.
- **When "half-time" or "full-time" study is a prerequisite for financial aid, translate these terms into number of credits the student must be taking to be eligible. Include this information in all financial aid material.**
- **Develop financial aid for part-time students.** For example, the University of Minnesota has instituted "Minnesota Part-Time Student Grants."
- **Assess private scholarships administered by the institution to determine which ones can be applied to part-time study. Make this information available to the financial aid office and potential part-time students.**
- **Publicize the existence of special types of aid for graduate students,** such as the Graduate and Professional Study Fellowships administered by the U.S. Department of Education, the American Fellowship of the American Association of University Women, and the Lena Lake Forrest Fellowship of the Business and Professional Women's Foundation.[32]
- **Hold a workshop for potential returning graduate students to acquaint them with sources of aid available at the school and through their own community.** Many adults are not aware of tuition reimbursement plans through work or of local scholarships.
- **Make short-term loans available to students to tide them over while other sources of aid are being processed.** The University of Akron (OH) provides such loans up to 60 percent of instructional and general sevices fees. No minimum credit load is required in order to be eligible.
- **Provide emergency assistance for students who are forced to cut back on their class schedule due to emergency, but whose lightened load would render them ineligible to continue receiving financial assistance.**
- **Examine the criteria used for awarding research and teaching assistantships to insure that they do not have a disproportionate effect on re-entry women students.**
- **Develop assistantships that can be shared by two "half-time" graduate students.** This would enable many more re-entry women to participate in either the research or teaching aspect of graduate school.
- **Allow graduate students to participate in cooperative education[33] thereby drawing a salary as they take courses and learn on the job.** American University (DC) has opened its cooperative education program to graduate students.
- **Allow retired persons to attend graduate classes tuition-free at a reduced rate.** The University of Maryland has a "Golden I.D." program for students over 60 years old who are employed no more than 20 hours per week. These students can have their tuition paid for either graduate or undergraduate courses in degree programs.
- **Encourage local community groups to sponsor re-entry graduate women on a scholarship basis.**
- **Provide women's centers, re-entry programs or other places where women thinking of returning to graduate school may seek information, with complete details of financial aid availability.** Many older students do not contact the financial aid office to begin with because they believe they will not be eligible for assistance.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Support Systems

Once the re-entry student has gained admission to a graduate program and has secured the money to pay for it, she can begin to think about a strategy for success in her chosen field. Two interrelated areas contribute greatly to her chances of success: encouragement throughout graduate study and an appropriate entry-level position upon graduation. The first of these factors, whether it is called encouragement, emotional support, or academic challenge, is a difficult quality to define. However, graduate students who receive this kind of support are well aware of its presence. On the other hand, students who lack this kind of encouragement often drop out of school, or leave without finishing a thesis — some never knowing just "why" but with the vague feeling that "graduate school isn't for me." Comprising a relatively small proportion of graduate students in some fields, women, minorities and especially re-entry students often find themselves with this feeling. Without women and minority faculty members to model themselves after, or peers to confide in, they may be at a decided disadvantage unrelated to academic ability. For example, at one institution, women in medical, law and business school sought guidance and counseling services at a rate close to three times that of graduate men.[34] The women students said that they lacked role models and that male faculty members seemed to be uncomfortable with female students in or out of class.

Additionally, women, minorities and especially re-entry students often have cultural stereotypes to overcome within their own families. For example, one black woman returning to school found that few women her age were on campus, none of them were black, and none of the faculty were used to dealing with older black women. Her family and friends couldn't understand why she wanted to do such a "crazy" thing as to go to school at her age, and gave her little emotional support. In fact, there is evidence that returning women students at the graduate level experience more conflict with their husbands, parents, and friends than returning undergraduates.[35] The reasons for this have not

been extensively explored, but it is possible that the more "scholarly" undertaking of graduate school by the returning woman conflicts so with their previous impression of her that family and friends may be less supportive.

There is probably little that an academic institution can do to improve the climate at home for re-entry students. However, much can be done to counter any lack of family support with strong encouragement within the campus environment.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Assign a specific academic counselor[36] to work with re-entry graduate women in each department.** This person should be well-informed about other programs on campus of interest to re-entry women.
- **Encourage professors who were re-entry students themselves to share their experiences with returning graduate women.**
- **Provide each re-entry graduate woman with a "mentor."** Drake University (IA) introduces every re-entry woman in their program to a successful woman in the same field.
- **Set up workshops or use faculty development programs to train faculty how to be mentors for returning graduate women.** Because this is a student population with which most faculty have had little experience, they need to become informed about re-entry students and how to deal with students who may be older than they are.
- **Publish a resource list of students, faculty and staff who are interested in assisting re-entry students and make this available around the campus.** The University of Michigan Center for Continuing Education of Women publishes such a list called, "Adult Student. Faculty and Staff Resource Locator for Adults Thinking About a Return to School." This listing includes addresses and phone numbers, and a brief description of each person such as "graduate student and recently relocated single parent."
- **Assign "peer advisors" to returning graduate women to help with academic and adjustment problems.** At Alverno College (WI) peer advisors are chosen on the basis of similar age group, background, and major area of study.
- **Schedule "brown bag lunches" for graduate women to meet other returnees, whether in their department or others.**
- **Encourage the development of a college-wide organization of graduate re-entry women.**
- **Set up seminars for graduate women with successful women, particularly in each discipline,** to encourage the exchange of ideas and to develop networks that will go beyond the campus.
- **Plan an orientation program for re-entry graduate women.**
- **Plan an orientation for the families of re-entry women.** Include a tour of the campus. Encourage family members to discuss questions they may have.
- **Establish a child care center and/or drop-in baby-sitting service for students, faculty and administrators with small children. Publicize the existence of these and other child care facilities in the community.[37]**
- **Plan a conference for graduate women that would also address the concerns of re-entry students.** The University of Michigan held a conference for "Women in Graduate School" which included sessions on financial aid, affirmative action, job-hunting, stress management, safety and self-defense, planning for the future, and mid-life graduate women. Registration at the conference was free and child care was available.
- **Encourage the development of women's caucuses or committees within graduate departments.** These groups may help provide encouragement and information to their members.

Career Planning

In addition to providing encouragement during graduate school, the institution plays a major role in determining how students will fare after leaving the university. Most schools have some type of "placement" center to help students get jobs, but the majority of jobs are not found through this formal process. Rather, the *informal* network of contacts that exists among students, faculty, administrators and the business community accounts for many more placements.

To tap into this valuable informal network, students need to establish a rapport with their professors while in school. Since graduate classes are generally smaller, it would seem on the surface that there would be ample opportunity for all students to get to know their teachers better and benefit from a close relationship with them. This is not always the case, however. Faculty, like any other group of individuals, generally feel more comfortable around people like themselves. Because the majority of tenured faculty at the graduate level in most fields are white males, it is not unreasonable to predict that, generally, their choice of "protégés" from the student body might closely resemble themselves, i.e., they are less likely to choose women.

In addition, faculty are less inclined to select protégés who are older than they are, finding this situation uncomfortable.

Without a close relationship with their teachers, re-entry students miss out on more than an intangible form of encouragement. They also miss out on financial benefits as well. For example, some companies provide financial aid to graduate students in science and engineering departments, and these arrangements are customarily set up through the intercession of a faculty member. This practice often favors male students. In addition, male students are more likely to be invited to share authorships, accompany faculty on professional trips and meet recognized scholars outside their

departments.[38] Students who are chosen for any of these activities often have a marked advantage in the job market later on.

The Present Employment Picture

Women with graduate degrees are *more likely to be unemployed* than their male counterparts in many fields.[39] Those women who *are* employed to tend to start out at lower salaries than men and to be promoted more slowly.[40] Although these deficits might be explained in part by the practices of individual employers, much can be done by the graduate schools themselves to improve the situation, not only by working for equity on campus but also by promoting fair practices in the business community.

What the Institution Can Do

- **Encourage women students to seek out "mentors" in their own department** by holding a workshop to discuss why mentors are important, how to choose them, and how to increase the chances of their being selected by a mentor.
- **Hold workshops for faculty to help them overcome the tendency to counsel women students toward "traditionally female" low-paying fields.**
- **Set up internships for students at the graduate level.** For example, graduate students in Women's Studies at George Washington University (DC) can participate in Congressional research on women's issues while working towards their Master's degree.[41]
- **Collect data about co-authorships to see if faculty choose women as often as men when selecting student co-authors.** If disparities are found, discuss the problem with faculty and devise a process to ensure fairness.
- **Require that faculty post job openings they know of,** rather than simply confiding the information to a few chosen students.
- **Periodically survey graduates to see how they are faring in the work place and if there are any marked discrepancies in salary or position related to the age and/or sex of the students.** If the reasons can be traced to the graduate school experience, work to change the situation to make it more equitable.
- **Encourage businesses with a good record for advancing women and minorities to attend "career days" at the school.** Do not admit companies which ask to interview men only, or offer lower paying jobs to women students. Cooperating with such companies may violate Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and Title IX of the Education Amendments.
- **Institute "refresher courses" for re-entry students who have already received degrees but who have been out of the work force for a time.** Such courses enable adults to hone their skills and to update their knowledge in a particular field, *or* to move into a related area where job opportunities are better. For example, the Women in Science "Career Facilitation Projects" offered through the National Science Foundation have helped many women with degrees in science get back into the labor force or into graduate school.[42]
- **Offer grants to re-entry students for research.** The Bunting Institute at Radcliffe College (MA) offers research stipends for women who already have a Ph.D. and who want to re-enter the academic mainstream.

CONCLUSION

To find out how well an institution treats its students, one need only look at the graduate school. There, any problems that may exist for undergraduates are magnified — financial aid is scarcer, credit transfer more difficult, the feeling of isolation greater, and so on. For re-entry women, these problems are complicated further by the time constraints of job and/or family responsibilities.

While it is encouraging to note that some graduate schools have recognized these pressures and have instituted practices to alleviate them, many schools have not. Yet the numbers of re-entry women in graduate school are steadily growing. And in a few years time, many re-entry students who are now undergraduates will be ready to seek admission to graduate school. The schools they choose then will be the ones which are already preparing for their arrival *now*.

NOTES

[1]Although it is difficult to get an exact count of returning women graduate students because of the way records are kept, all indicators point toward a rapid rise. For example, the U.S. Census reports that the number of female students aged 25 to 34 years old (their "oldest" student category) enrolled at all levels of higher education rose 187 percent between 1970 and 1978. At the same time, the enrollment of women graduate students grew five times as fast as the enrollment of men. *University Women*, December 1979, p. 5.

[2]This definition is different from that used in the rest of the re-entry series because it applies *specifically* to graduate students.

[3]Carol Jane LeFevre, "The Mature Woman as Graduate Student," *School Review*, Vol. 80, No. 2, February 1972, pp. 281-297.

[4]"Prospects for Graduate Education, 1980-2000," Council of Graduate Schools in the United States, *COMMUNICATOR*, Vol. 13, No. 1, September 1980, p. 1-2.

[5]Much of the information in this section has already appeared in other re-entry papers in this series.

[6]Education Amendments of 1972, Sections 901-907, 20 U.S.C., Sections 1681-86 (1972). Title IX regulation, 45 CFR Part 86, can be found at 40 *Fed. Reg.* 21428-45 (June 4, 1975). For additional information, see "Federal Laws Concerning Sex Discrimination in Educational Institutions," and other Title IX materials published by the Project on the Status and Education of Woman, Association of American Colleges.

[7]The Act also covers discrimination in admissions and recruiting in public vocational schools, public undergraduate schools and public professional schools.

[8]Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 permits special recruiting programs. Section 86.23(a) of the regulation implementing the statute states that ". . . a recipient may be required to undertake additional recruitment efforts for one sex as a remedial action." An institution in an effort to overcome

the effects of past discriminatory practices may engage in activities designed to interest women students in fields where they are under-represented.

[9]The Supreme Court decision in *Regents of the University of California* vs. *Bakke*, 438 U.S. 265 (1978) allows race to be taken into account in admissions decisions in some instances. However, it is not clear if the same reasoning applies to sex.

[10]See footnote 8.

[11]Title VII (Section 799a) and Title VII (Section 845) were amended by the Comprehensive Manpower Act and the Nurse Training Amendments Act of 1971.

[12]Age Discrimination Act of 1975, 42 U.S.C. Sections 6101-6107 (1975). The final government-wide regulation for the Age Discrimination Act can be found at 45 C.F.R. Part 90 and at 44 *Fed. Reg.* 33768-86 (June 12, 1979). The Act also requires each federal agency to issue agency-specific regulations. At the time of this writing (Fall 1980) agencies were in the process of issuing those regulations. For additional information, see "The Age Discrimination Act of 1975 and Women on Campus," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1978.

[13]In a 1977 study done by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, of 114 medical schools surveyed, 28 used age as an explicit entrance criterion. One school stated flatly that no applicants over 35 would be considered for admission. These figures apparently reflect the belief that graduate education is an "investment" which yields fewer returns to the discipline and society as the student grows older. However, the longer life span of women in general, as well as individual differences in life span and career perseverance, may affect the number of years a person devotes to her or his profession as much as their age at the time of admission. For example, older women are less likely to change careers begun later in life; it is quite possible that the "second career" phenomenon is more likely to occur in males who made very early career choices.

[14]See section on "Legal Considerations," p. 2.

[15]Samuel H. Logan, "Testing for Sex Bias in Graduate School Admissions," *College and University*, Winter, 1980, pp. 156-70.

[16]Office of Health and Manpower "Career Patterns," 1975, as cited by George Stevens and R. Penny Marquette, "Women on the Move," *Journal of College Placement*, Summer, 1979, pp. 43-45.

[17]Esther Benjamin and Judith A. Levy, "Barriers to Educational Opportunities for Re-entry Women in Private Universities," Program on Women, Northwestern University, 1979, p. 6.

[18]For example, see Helen Astin, *The Woman Doctorate in America: Origins, Career and Family*. New York: Russell/Sage Foundation, 1969; Cecilia H. Foxley, *Nonsexist Counseling: Helping Women and Men Redefine Their Roles*. Iowa: Kent/Hunt Publishing Co., 1979, p. 70; and M. Heims, et al. "Productivity of Women Physicians," *Journal of the American Medical Association*, October 25, 1976, pp. 1961-64.

[19]Some of these suggestions also appeared in "Recruitment and Admissions: Opening the Door for Re-entry women," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1980.

[20]See also "Barriers to Re-entry Women: College Transfer Policies, Residency and Graduation Requirements," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Associaiton of American Colleges, 1980.

[21]See also "Confidence and Competence: Basic Skills Programs and Refresher Courses for Re-entry Women," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1980.

[22]See also "Recruitment and Admissions: Opening the Door For Re-entry Women," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1980.

[23]Annette Cagiano et al., "Academic Performance of Returning Adult Students," *College Board Review*, Winter 1977-78, pp. 13-16.

[24]See also "Campus Child Care: A Challenge for the 80's," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1980.

[25]For more information about time limits and residency requirements see "Barriers to Re-entry Women: College Transfer Policies, Residency and Graduation Requirements," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1980.

[26]See also the paper on re-entry women who are part-time students, Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, in press.

[27]See also "Obtaining a Degree: Alternative Options for Re-entry Women," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1980.

[28]See G.L. Burkett and I.W. Gabrielson, "A Study of the Demand for Part-time Residency Programs," *Journal of Medical Education*, Vol. 51, No. 10, October 1976, pp. 829-35.

[29]Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1980.

[30]The G.I. Bill is not included in this discussion since so few women are eligible.

[31]For additional information about aid, especially at the undergraduate level, see "Financial Aid: Helping Re-entry Women Pay College Costs," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1980.

[32]Addresses are listed under "Resources."

[33]For more information on cooperative education, see "Obtaining a Degree: Alternative Options for Re-entry Women," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1980.

[34]Leah H. Kaplan and Jane Pao, "Problems Facing Women Students in Schools of Medicine, Law, and Business. *Journal of the American College Health Association*, Vol. 26, October 1977, pp. 76-78.

[35]Angelica Brennan, "Some Shifts in Psychological Stresses Reported by Re-entry Women in Education," paper presented at the National Women's Studies Association Conference, 1979; abstracted in *FRONTIERS—A Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Spring 1980, p. 4.

[36]See also "The Counseling Needs of Re-entry Women," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1980.

[37]For additional information on this subject, see "Campus Child Care: A Challenge for the 80's," Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, 1980.

[38]Task Force on Women Doing Research, American Psychological Association, as cited in *On Campus With Women*, Project on the Status and Education of Women, Association of American Colleges, No. 19, March 1978, p. 5.

[39]See for example, *Facts About Women in Higher Education*, Washington, DC: Women's Equity Action League Educational and Legal Defense Fund, 1977, 14 pages.

[40]*Ibid*; see also *Women Scientists in Industry and Government*, Washington, DC: National Academy of Science, 1980, 41 pages.

[41]For more information, write to the Women's Studies Program and Policy Center, 2025 Eye St., NW, Room 212, George Washington University, Washington, DC 20052.

[42]For more information on how institutions can participate in this program, write to the National Science Foundation Career Facilitation Projects for Women, Washington, DC 20550.

SELECTED LIST OF RESOURCES

Organizations

American Association of
University Women
Educational Foundation Programs
2401 Virginia Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20037

Business and Professional
Women's Foundation
Lena Lake Forrest Fellowships
2012 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20036

U.S. Department of Education
Graduate and Professional
Study Fellowships
400 Maryland Ave., SW
ROB 3, Room 3060
Washington, DC 20202

Publications

Astin, Helen S. *The Woman Doctorate in America: Origins, Career and Family*, 1969. 196 pages. Extensive longitudinal study of women doctorates based on over 1,900 students. Considers three basic aspects of career development: patterns of choice (related to family background); work patterns (including changes in employment and temporary withdrawal from the work force); and occupational achievement (including honors, scholarly productivity, rank and salary). Describes obstacles encountered by women doctorates and makes recommendations on how to improve the situation. Published by the Russell Sage Foundation, New York, NY. (Out of print, but may be available in libraries.)

Churgin, Jonah R. *The New Woman and the Old Academe: Sexism and Higher Education*. 1978. 254 pages. Gives an overview of women in society, their socialization, expectations, and performance, and how this applies to women students, as undergraduates and graduates, in their choice of discipline and quest for fellowships. Makes special mention of women students in law and medicine. Explores the topic of sexism as an overriding influence in all of these spheres, and suggests strategies for change. Extensive bibliography included. Available from Libra Publishers, Inc., 391 Willets Rd., Roslyn Heights, New York, NY 11577. $7.95 (hardcover) plus postage.

Lantz, Alma E. with Marna C. Whittington, M. Louise Fox, Linda Elliot, and Karen Sackett. *Reentry Programs for Female Scientists*, 1980. 195 pages. Profiles returning women scientists in many fields: their numbers, incentives to re-enter, and obstacles. Describes programs for facilitating re-entry, including necessary ingredients for program success. The appendices list National Science Foundation Career Facilitation Project descriptions and information about other re-entry programs for women. Bibliography included. Available from Praeger Publishers, 383 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10017. $18.95 (hardcover) plus 5% shipping and 75¢ handling. ISBN No. 055771-2.

McGill, Eleanor M. and Darwin D. Hendel. *New Horizons: Impact of an Orientation Session for Graduate and Professional School Women*, 1974. 62 pages. Describes the implementation and evaluation of orientation, noting the kinds of information most frequently asked for, reactions of the participants (many of whom are re-entry women), and suggestions for designing future programs. Available from Measurement Services Center, University of Minnesota, 9 Clarence Ave., SE, Minneapolis, MN 55414. About $3.00 (soft cover).

National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs. *Sexual Harassment: A Report on the Sexual Harassment of Students*, 1980. 86 pages. Prepared by Frank J. Till. Defines sexual harassment, explores the legal liabilities of institutions and tells what some institutions have done to deal with the problem of sexual harassment on campus. Available from the National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs, 1832 M St., NW, Room 821, Washington, DC 20036. Free. (This reference is included because many students, including re-entry women, have cited sexual harassment as a detriment to their graduate school experience.)

National Research Council. *A Selected List of Major Fellowship Opportunities and Aids to Advanced Education for United State Citizens*, 1980. 61 pages. Describes fellowship programs, notes requirements for eligibility, and where to write for more information on each program. Available from the National Science Foundation, Forms and Publications, Room 235, 1800 G St., NW, Washington, DC 20550. Free.

STAFF

Director	Bernice Resnick Sandler
Administrative Associate	Mary De Mouy
Staff Associate	Ursula Barrett Paquette
Staff Associate	Jeanne Fisher-Thompson
Staff Associate	Roberta M. Hall
Administrative Associate	Jean O'Gorman
Staff Assistant	Donna Zubris
Staff Assistant	Karen Seebohm
Staff Assistant	Lisa Shuger
Staff Assistant	Julie Kuhn

October 1980

CUT ALONG DOTTED LINE

RE-ENTRY WOMEN AND GRADUATE SCHOOL

FIELD TEST

You can assist us in evaluating this paper by completing the following short questionnaire. If you have additional comments, please use the back of this page or add another sheet. It will help us if you return this questionnaire in the enclosed pre-paid envelope by December 15, 1980 to:

Women's Re-entry Project
Project on the Status and Education of Women
Association of American Colleges
1818 R Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009

9

1. **What is your primary identification?** (Check One)
   a. ☐ College president or other administrator. Specify title .....
   b. ☐ College faculty member, lecturer, professor
   c. ☐ College student
   d. ☐ Elementary or secondary school teacher or administrator
   e. ☐ State or local education agency employee
   f. ☐ Federal employee
   g. ☐ Other. Please specify .....

2. **In addition, are you:** (Check All That Apply)
   a. ☐ An affirmative action officer or Title IX coordinator?
   b. ☐ Directly involved in programs affecting re-entry women?
   c. ☐ At a women's college?
   d. ☐ A member of a *campus* committee on women, women's center or women's group?
   e. ☐ A member of a *noncampus* women's group, women's center, or advocacy group (WEAL, NOW, National Women's Political Caucus, etc.)?
   f. ☐ A member of a women's professional society or women's caucus or committee of an academic discipline?

3. **If you are currently at a *postsecondary* institution:**
   a. Is it: ☐ public or ☐ private?
   b. Is it a: ☐ university ☐ other 4-year college ☐ 2-year college or ☐ proprietary school?
   c. Is the total enrollment: ☐ under 1,000 ☐ 1,000 to 5,000 ☐ 5,001 to 10,000 ☐ over 10,000?
   d. In what state is your institution?.....

4. **Do you think this is a useful paper?**
   a. YES (Respond to **ALL** reasons that apply)
      1. ☐ to EVALUATE OR CHANGE POLICIES, such as .....
      2. ☐ to START NEW PROGRAMS OR EFFORTS to assist re-entry women, such as .....
      3. ☐ to REDESIGN OR IMPROVE EXISTING PROGRAMS OR SERVICES, such as .....
      4. ☐ to IDENTIFY NEW RESOURCES
      5. ☐ to IMPROVE RECRUITMENT of re-entry women to campus by .....
      6. ☐ to TRAIN STAFF to work more effectively with issues regarding re-entry women
      7. ☐ to EDUCATE OR INFORM OTHERS about the issues. Specify whom.....
      8. ☐ to EDUCATE MYSELF ABOUT THE ISSUES
      9. ☐ OTHER. Please specify .....
   b. ☐ NO, this paper is not useful because .....

5. **What, if any, *important* omissions were there from the paper? (Respond to *ALL* that apply)**
   a. ☐ NONE, it covered all aspects of the topic well.
   b. ☐ ISSUES should be described more fully. Please indicate how .....
   c. ☐ APPROACHES OR ALTERNATIVE REMEDIES were omitted. Please identify.....
   d. ☐ IMPORTANT MODELS OR INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS were not mentioned. Please identify .....
   e. ☐ KEY RESOURCES were not mentioned. Please identify.....
   f. ☐ OTHER. Please describe any other omissions or suggested additions.....

6. **Did you find the paper to be clear, well organized and easy to understand?**
   a. ☐ Yes
   b. ☐ It could be improved by.....

7. **If you found any factual errors or misleading statements in the paper, please identify them (indicating the page number, error or statement and include the correct information if possible). Use the other side of this page.**

8. **Please provide any additional comments or criticisms. Enclose other descriptive material, if desired, and use another sheet of paper if needed.**